

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
September 20 & 21, 2005**

The regular meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 9 A.M., on September 20, 2005 in Room 1D2 of the Transportation Building in Olympia, Washington.

Commissioners present at the meeting were: Chair O'Neal, Ed Barnes, Bob Distler, Dick Ford, Elmira Forner, and Dale Stedman.

MINUTES APPROVAL

Approval of March 15 & 16, 2005 meeting minutes was deferred.

TRANSPORTATION INNOVATION PARTNERSHIPS

Jeff Doyle, Director, Transportation Innovative Partnerships, provided an overview of TIPP's statutory responsibilities and leadership core function. For further information refer to agenda item number one handout.

**GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE
(GMAP) UPDATE AND TRANSPORTATION BENCHMARK REVIEW UPDATE**

Daniela Bremmer, Director, Strategic Assessment, Strategic Planning and Programming, provided an update regarding the Department's GMAP efforts and transportation benchmarks. She shared that the Department reported on highway project delivery to the Governor's Office in July 2005. For further information refer to agenda item number three handout.

TOLLING STUDY – KICK OFF WITH CAMBRIDGE SYSTEMATICS, INC.

David Forte, Systems Planning Manager, Urban Planning Office, provided an overview of work to date and future plans on the tolling study. He noted that the contract has been signed and the study is moving forward.

Lance Neumann, President, Cambridge Systematics Inc., explained that the purpose of the study is to create a process that facilitates the state's ability to make policy level decisions.

Jeff Buxbaum, Project Manager, Cambridge Systematics Inc., explained that the policy framework includes tolling feasibility, the Tacoma Narrows Bridge and statewide implications. Implementation issues are tolling technology, legal and regulatory authority, as well as organizational and administrative, social and environmental considerations. For further information refer to agenda item number four handout.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT / COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Reema Griffith, Administrator, briefed the Commission regarding the Commission's interest in having an independently hosted website with its own domain. Possibilities are being explored. The idea of holding a Commission retreat was explored. This would allow the Commission to discuss its roles and responsibilities. Potential facilitators, dates and locations were discussed with Commissioner's leaning towards November 17, 2005 for the retreat.

COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Commissioner Barnes provided an update regarding ideas and issues discussed by the Rail Study team. During the work session the team members discussed the draft scope of work on the Request For Proposal.

Commissioner Distler provided an update regarding the status of new vessel construction and builder selection. He briefly discussed current ferry operations and route schedules.

Commissioner Forner provided a briefing regarding the status of completed and current audits preformed by the Transportation Performance Audit Board.

Commissioner Stedman provided an update on the status of the Washington Transportation Plan team meetings. He explained that team members are visiting with local MPO/RTPO's gathering information.

LEWIS & CLARK BICENTENNIAL UPDATE AND EVENTS

Judy Lorenzo, Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Liaison, provided an overview of upcoming bicentennial events. She provided an overview of selected projects and status of current efforts to rename the Megler Safety Rest Area to Dismal Nitch.

David Nicandri, Director, Washington State Historical Society, provided information regarding the Lewis & Clark event "Destination the Pacific".

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Due to recording system malfunction the Secretary's report was not recorded.

PUBLIC AND LEGISLATOR COMMENT PERIOD

Due to recording system malfunction a portion of this item was not recorded.

John Doerschuk, citizen, expressed concerns regarding several transportation issues, including the land purchase for the Bainbridge maintenance facility.

RAIL STUDY DISCUSSION

Shippers

Glen Squires, Vice President, Washington Wheat Commission, explained that the rail-shipping situation in the state is often a very difficult environment faced by shippers trying to move product to market. Rail is a crucial component of the transportation infrastructure, but is also an ongoing challenge. He provided a brief overview of shipper's issues, and noted that the rail study should include an evaluation of the ripple effect of rail industry policy on the state, including its communities and shippers.

Lieutenant Colonel Steven P. Schneider, Deputy Installation Transportation Officer, Fort Lewis and Captain Daniel Finan, Operations Officer, 833rd Transportation Battalion, Seattle, explained the logistics of high volume rail shipments. Specific concerns are the ability to have rapid port clearance; easement right of ways; and strategic seaport/deployment plans.

Paul Vander Stoep, General Manager, Washington Perishable Shippers Cooperative Association, explained the process of shipping perishable goods, specifically potatoes. He shared that the biggest concern is that there is very little rail car capacity for moving perishable products.

Dale W. King, Director of Rail Services, Weyerhaeuser Company, shared that the two major concerns are rail and port capacity. He expressed that the Commission has defined the rail capacity study well and that Weyerhaeuser is very supportive.

State – Freight Rail

Karen Schmidt, Executive Director, Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board, shared that the Board looked at the rail study scope of work and determined that freight and passenger rail needs should be looked at separately. Mainline and short-line rail may have different goals and measurements and should also be considered separately; passenger rail should also be assessed differently from freight rail. The Commission should also utilize the Port Association Rail Study as a resource for mainline rail capacity needs. She also noted that other state agencies should also have the opportunity to provide input.

Steven King, Director, Safety and Consumer Protection and Vicki Elliott, Assistant Director, Transportation Safety, Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC), requested that the Commission make safety impacts and investments a distinct element of the rail study. Mr. King expressed that the UTC is very interested in the study and would be willing to offer information and prospective as the study proceeds.

Andrea Riniker, Governor's Port Initiative, submitted written testimony explaining that Governor Gregoire has undertaken a "Container Ports Initiative" to assure that the State of Washington, it's major ports in Tacoma and Seattle, and other key participants, identify and accomplish what is required to capture the remarkable potential of these port assets.

Passenger Rail

Elizabeth O'Donoghue, Director, Amtrak Strategic Planning, presented an analysis overview of rail capacity in Washington State. She noted that Amtrak is experiencing delays as a result of lack of capacity, and slow orders on aging infrastructures.

An effective and complete rail study requires an intensive effort, participation and commitment to meet the growth demands placed on passenger, freight and the rail infrastructure.

Lloyd Flem, Executive Director, Washington Association of Rail Passengers (WashARP), shared that while there is continued focus on intercity rail passenger advocacy, the WashARP has broadened its mandate to reflect its ongoing and growing interest, and support for a state role in freight rail as well. WashARP endorses the Rail Capacity Study, and trusts it will continue to take a careful and comprehensive view of the state's future role in determining rail transportation as part of Washington's transportation mission.

Judy Giniger, Director, Public Transportation and Rail Division, provided the Department's perspective and expectations of the rail study. The Department has a very strong interest in the study. The study needs to provide a report that will contribute realistic information in order to provide decision makers with clear policy and investment choices that disclose probable outcomes resulting from one choice or another. As well, the study should include quality of life impacts to small communities all over the state. This product should reflect all of the costs throughout the system.

Kelly Taylor, Administrator, Oregon Department of Transportation, Rail Office, submitted written comments regarding the rail study scope of work.

RTPO's

Peter Beaulieu, Senior Transportation Planner, Puget Sound Regional Council, provided brief comments regarding major points on the scope of work for the rail study. He emphasized that the study should be systemic and then geographically specific.

Vicki Cummings, Executive Director, Grays Harbor Council of Governments (SWRTPO), shared that the rail study meets the needs and addresses concerns of the SWRTPO. If the study is applied to regional decisions based on economic development, the study will fulfill the needs. The presentation focused primarily on Port needs.

Commissioner Forner on behalf of, Jeff Wilkins, Executive Director, Wenatchee Valley Transportation Council (WVTC), provided a brief overview of the WVTC's, needs primarily focusing on mainline freight congestion.

Cities / Local

Susan Sanchez, Director, Policy, Planning and Major Projects Division and Ron Borowski, Freight Program, Seattle Department of Transportation, shared that rail transportation is critical to economic vitality of the city, the region and state. Rail facilities are a predominate feature in Seattle and provide major functions. The City of Seattle is committed to freight and passenger mobility.

Ross Kelley, Spokane County Engineer, provided an overview of rail issues in the Spokane area.

The Commission meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m., on September 21, 2005.

WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DAN O'NEAL, Chair

DICK FORD, Vice-Chair

EDWARD BARNES, Member

VACANT

ELMIRA FORNER, Member

ROBERT S. DISTLER, Member

DALE STEDMAN, Member

DOUGLAS MACDONALD, Ex-Officio Member
Secretary of Transportation

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Administrator

DATE OF APPROVAL